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Services Division

Committee on China

Committee Minutes - 172nd Meeting - 3 June 1958

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D/S Representatives: [REDACTED]

Guests: [REDACTED]

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1. China's new railroad construction program, which continued at a modest rate in 1957, is once again in high gear. The 1958 construction goal of 1,295 km of new lines will be considerably overfulfilled due to the impetus of the present program. The Trans-Sinkiang line will be extended more than 400 km to Chichiaoching. The Paotou-Lenchow, Nanping-Foochow, and Kwangsi-Kweichow lines will be completed before the end of the year. Completion dates for the Szechwan-Kweichow, Chengtu-Kunming, Wuhu-Kueichi, and Neichiang-Kunming lines have been brought forward. Construction and survey is in hand for lines previously given little press mention such as the Kalgan-Chining, Tien-shui-Luehyang, Lienchiang-Canton, Loyang-Hu (Hupeh), Tunghsien-Kueih, Kanchow-Lungyen, Chinchow-Yingkow, and Changchow-Chienkuochi routes plus a line from Chengtu eastward to a point north of Chungking and a line connecting the iron mines at Chingtiehshan with the Trans-Sinkiang line.

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2. The Chinese press has been talking of plans to increase rice acreage north of the Huai River. The problem they will face will be that of squeezing in the rice crop between the harvesting of the winter wheat crop and its replanting time.

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[REDACTED] M/AG.

3. Recent Chicom estimates of the coming winter wheat harvest indicate a 40 percent, or about 8 million ton, increase over 1957, despite drought and reduced acreage.

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[REDACTED] This startling claim follows a winter of intensive preparation by peasants, who appear to have been working

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harder and more purposefully than ever before. The irrigated area has been expanded by over 50 million acres (over 55 percent) and some 10,000 million tons (sic) of natural manure collected. Allocations of chemical fertilizers and pesticides have increased and the use of new types of implements is spreading. The area sown to high yield crops is being substantially expanded.

If the winter wheat crop approaches the Chicom estimate, which, though optimistic, is not considered impossible, then given average climatic conditions the 1958 state total grain target of 11 million tons (later raised to 15) increase over 1957 should be reached easily, although a dramatic increase in wheat is not necessarily applicable to remaining crops, as wheat may have had special treatment and in any case such rapid changes in the agricultural situation could involve weaknesses not foreseeable at this stage.

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4. The Deputy Minister of Chemical Industry, Communist China, has announced 1962 production targets for a wide range of chemical products, including chemical fertilizer 15 to 20 million tons, insecticides 135,000 tons, sulphuric acid $4\frac{1}{2}$ million tons, caustic soda 800,000 tons, synthetic fibre 100,000 tons, plastics 200,000 tons.

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These targets imply an enormous expansion in the chemical field in the period of the Second Five Year Plan, in many cases raising the level of production to rates comparable with recent Soviet Russian rates. Our preliminary assessment is that achievement of these targets would require a disproportionate allocation of industrial resources, even admitting that the chemical industry is one of China's more serious weaknesses.

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Agenda: The next meeting will be June 17. The topic will be Current Items. Room 1121 M at 1400.

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